

Jaguar Conservation Committee (JAGCT) Summary Notes
Douglas Visitor's Center, 345 16th Street
Douglas, Arizona
January 19 - 20, 2006

Meeting was called to order by Terry Johnson, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) at 1000 MST.

A. Opening Comments and Ground Rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. Only one person was supposed to speak at a time, with no side conversations, so that each person could be heard and the meeting could move forward. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG; i.e., everyone present at the meeting) were allowed to comment and were encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed at the meeting.

Terry Johnson (AGFD) encouraged attendees to sign up for Endangered Species Updates on the AGFD website www.azgfd.gov to obtain distributed information for JAGCT.

Handouts Available

1. Final Summary Notes: Habitat Sub-Committee Meeting, November 18, 2005, Lordsburg, NM
2. The Jaguar in the 21st Century summary
3. Sexual Differentiation in the Distribution Potential of Northern Jaguars
4. A Spatial Model of Potential Jaguar Habitat in Arizona
5. Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project – Progress Report 1. January 1, 2006
6. Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project – Research Objectives to Guide Conservation Actions for the Jaguar in Southeastern Arizona and Southwestern New Mexico.
7. Arizona, New Mexico Jaguar Conservation Team Research Committee Goals and Objectives, January 18, 2006

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

Order of agenda was changed to add discussion of borderlands issues and book publication introductions to Other Business.

C. Status of Action Items

The JAGCT August 30, 2005 Summary Notes were discussed, no changes were required. Final notes will be posted on the website.

D. Task Reports

Update on Arizona Jaguar Sightings

Bill Van Pelt (AGFD) reported on 7 feline sightings collected since the last meeting. Two are under investigation, 6 have been classified as Class III (low ranking

sighting), Tim Snow (AGFD-Tucson Region) is investigating one class II sighting near the Arizona White Mountains.

Jaguar Sightings in Arizona
July 2005 – January 2006

Class ¹	Date	Location	Comments
III-1	Aug	Unknown, AZ	Unable to verify; Messages left on 3 occasions
III-1	Sept	Santa Rita Mtns, Pima Co., AZ	Description of a young mountain lion; spots not black
III-1	Oct	Whitewater Draw, Cochise Co., AZ	Description of house cat sized animal
II-7	Oct	Red Hills, Greenlee Co., AZ	Reported too late for field follow-up
III-1	Dec	Carol Spring Mtn, Gila Co., AZ	Description of mountain lion
III-1	Dec	Santa Rita Mtns, Santa Cruz Co., AZ	Description other than jaguar; black, size small
III-1	Dec	Chiricahua Mtns, Cochise Co., AZ	Described as jaguarondi, approximately 20lbs.

¹Class I = Evidence such as a carcass, skin, hair, photo, or confirmed tracks. Class II = report from a reliable source and detailed information provided. Class III = report vague or description or evidence suggests an animal other than a jaguar. See Jaguar Conservation Strategy for full definition of Classes.

Jack Childs (JAGCT Research Committee) has a photo of a black cat in Sonoita, which may be included in the eight sightings identified. Jack Childs and Tim Snow are working on plotting sightings on a map to determine sighting patterns and possible identification of additional areas to monitor.

Update on New Mexico Jaguar Sightings

Jim Stewart (New Mexico Department of Game & Fish) reported that New Mexico has not received any sighting reports. There have been no unusual cat reports of any kind but NM has gotten lynx reports.

Other Sightings

The NMDGF was asked for an update on a lynx sighting previously reported by Larry Link (citizen). Jim Stewart (NMDGF) has placed calls to Mr. Link for follow-up.

AGFD received a jaguarundi sighting in the McDowell Mountains, which are near Phoenix. It was noted that there are no confirmed occurrences of jaguarundi in Sonora, New Mexico or Arizona.

Update on Jaguar Depredation Reports

Jack Childs, Depredation Subcommittee Chair, reported that there were no verifiable kills since the last meeting.

University of Arizona (U of A) Research Update

Ten jaguar scats have been found, with one containing black hair. Two or three were found in conjunction with a marking and scrape sight. The U of A is conducting mitochondrial research and if results indicate jaguar DNA, they will conduct further microscopic DNA testing. Melanie Culver, U of A geneticist expert, indicated a need for fund raising if they go to microscopic level testing.

At the last meeting, \$2,040 was collected and matched for a total of \$7,500 for the U of A testing. This funding is being used on scat analysis. Melanie Culver reported that a U of A Technician has been hired to conduct the analysis of the 120 samples and is using the funds. In the meantime, additional samples are being collected. Analysis was started this week. The Sonora samples have already been analyzed. Emil McCain's (Humboldt University) samples are being analyzed now. The DNA analysis will determine puma versus jaguar scat. **Action Item:** The U of A scat analysis test results report deadline to the AGFD is May 31, 2006.

Research Committee Update

Jack Childs, Research Committee Chair, reported that the Research Committee was established and set the following goals:

1. Determine the research questions needed to better understand jaguar biology in S.E. Arizona and S.W. NM;
2. Determine what field methodology would be appropriate (i.e. DNA analysis, track scats, live trapping, radio collaring, blood samples); and
3. Design a field research protocol.

The committee determined that radio collaring would be the best approach to collect information on movement patterns and travel corridors. Committee individuals feel that tranquilizing would be the best and safest way to capture a jaguar. The committee recommends the use of hounds to capture a jaguar. The committee determined that the capture team should be staffed by highly qualified, experienced professionals. The Research Committee will meet in February 2006.

Discussion regarding the Research Committee report followed:

How would the radio collar address concerns on safety? Is there evidence from Mexico studies that it is less likely it will be killed? In Brazil, if a cat has a collar, people leave it alone. The jaguar would have a satellite collar

Has the committee conducted a risk assessment of capture? The Research Committee finalized their risk assessment in February 2005 and submitted to AGFD.

Is it considered that a jaguar could be chased from AZ to Mexico? Is there another effort to reach the public in the Mexico area? Formal discussions with Mexico will commence after the Research Committee has made recommendations. The Research Committee needs to address what the chase would entail and whether a radio collar

would be placed on the animal. After knowing these details, cross border movements and human safety issues can be addressed by the agencies.

What are the road boundaries where these cats exist? Arizona I-19 is a roadway of concern, otherwise jaguars exist mostly in areas that are bladed 30 mph roads. Highway 2 is the concern in Mexico.

Would the capture include staff experienced with lion captures? Agencies involved do not have specific jaguar experience. Biologists and veterinarians that have vast experience with tranquilizing other mammals would be recruited for the effort. Other agencies with qualified people would help once a plan is in place. Getting the appropriate people will not be an issue. The first objective is to identify what we want to do and why we want to do it.

Paper Presentation

Emil McCain (Humboldt University) read his document “*Research Objectives to Guide Conservation Actions for the Jaguar in Southeastern Arizona and Southwestern New Mexico.*” The paper had 2 objectives:

1. Describe and quantify the current distribution of jaguars in SE Arizona and SW New Mexico;
2. Describe and quantify the habitat requirements of jaguars in SE AZ and SW New Mexico.

Jack Childs (Research Committee) indicated that an AGFD bobcat expert, Don Swan, and Kevin Hansen, a cougar author/biologist, are part of the Research Team to assist in habitat discussions. As yet, no research methodology has been agreed upon by the Research Committee. Proven methodologies show that telemetry is a preferred approach to determining habitat.

The Research Committee is currently focused on gathering research for conservation efforts. **Action Item:** The Research Committee will meet and determine habitat methodology at their next research meeting to be scheduled by February 27, 2006. An analysis of the research objectives will be submitted by March 1, 2006 documenting deployment costs.

6-Year Review of Jaguar Conservation Agreement Activities Update March 1997 through December 2003- Technical Report

Bill Van Pelt reported that the report will be updated for distribution via the website on February 3, 2006. The deadline for comment submittal on the report is February 28, 2006.

Legal Protection of the Jaguar in Arizona and New Mexico

No new updates.

Mexico Update

Mexico convened a Jaguar Congress in Cuernavaca, entitled “The Jaguar in the 21st Century”. Bill Van Pelt (AGFD) and Sergio Avila (Sky Island Alliance) attended. The meeting included presentations of on-going conservation work in Mexico. A summary of the meeting breakout group topics were discussed. The JAGCT continues to coordinate with Mexico through the Trilateral Conservation Committee. The Trilateral Committee meets in San Diego May 2006. **Action Item:** Sergio Avila and Bill Van Pelt will discuss the duplication and distribution of the electronic compendium from “The Jaguar in the 21st Century” Congress.

Habitat Report Update

Recommendations are being gathered from Habitat Committee members for compilation in a habitat report. Documents reviewed include information from the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), Sierra Institute, and the NMDGF. Refined analysis map and the re-gap information would be used for Arizona and New Mexico analysis. The jaguar habitat report would summarize what work had occurred in the past year. The CBD report is a contract to the AGFD. **Action item:** CBD will have the revised habitat report to AGFD by Monday, January 23, 2006. Bill Van Pelt will distribute the habitat report to the habitat sub-committee. It was clarified that contracted reports submitted to AGFD do not reflect the agency’s opinion.

AZ & NM Habitat committee needs to come forward with recommendations of what jaguar habitat is. It was requested that a map be developed that shows sightings and where the committee would like to conduct conservation activities. The signatory agencies received the recommendations and comments were solicited.

It was recommended that the NM commissions be allowed to comment on the habitat map. **Action Item:** The Habitat Committee will invite the NM commission stakeholders to participate and provide input.

It was reiterated that participation on the Habitat Committee is strictly voluntary. Clear communications 30 days prior to meetings is necessary so participants are aware of what decisions need to happen ahead of time. **Action Item:** Write a letter to Conservation Agreement signatories to remind them that they must self-subscribe to the Arizona Game & Fish website. Make sure to include Cochise County representative - Richard Searle.

Other Business:

1. Kim Vacariu (Wildlands Project) introduced borderlands issues as they pertain to endangered species and handed out “*Ecological Considerations for Border Security Operations*”. Kim Vacariu reminded the committee that the U.S. House has proposed construction of 700 miles of infrastructure from the Pacific to Gulf of Mexico, with ~300 miles is along the AZ/Mexico border. He appealed that this group recognize the impacts to the potential fragmentation of the jaguar habitat and that these and other sensitive species are negatively impacted. He proposed that one of the Jaguar committees create an official statement indicating a serious

concern about the impact to sensitive species. 33 state, federal and local organizations were involved in a border ecology symposium held in Tucson, AZ. Ecology must be included in the border discussions. The solution to the ecological problems involving the border infrastructure will require immigration reform and decisions will be made in Washington, D.C. and Mexico. **Action Item:** The Habitat Committee will write a letter providing the jaguar habitat identification and promote its conservation as the U.S. moves towards a border solution.

What are NGOs doing? Defenders of Wildlife produced a report “*On the Line: The Impacts of Immigration Policy on Wildlife and Habitat in the Arizona Borderlands*” regarding border issues.

Has the Border Patrol been invited to participate on the Jaguar Conservation Committee? Jaguar Conservation Team sent a letter to the Border Patrol and volunteered to provide conservation issues input to the border challenges.

2. Michael Robinson (Center for Biological Diversity) introduced his book, “Predatory Bureaucracy”.
3. Wendy Warner introduced the “Working Wilderness” publication.
4. Eric Gese accepted his appointment to the Scientific Advisory Committee.

The next JAGCT meeting will be in Lordsburg, New Mexico at the James H. Baxter Civic Center at 313 E 4th Street on April 27 & 28, 2006 at 10:00am mountain standard time. Tentative agenda items have been identified as:

1. Scat DNA analysis update
2. Research Committee habitat paper presentation
3. Habitat Committee activities update

The meeting was adjourned at 1700.

Attendance Roster

Steve Pavlik	Sky Island Alliance
Jim Stuart	New Mexico Dept. of Game & Fish
Eva Sargent	DOW Tucson
Anna Mary Childs, Jack Childs	JAGCT Research Committee
Kim Vacariu	Wildlands Project
Wally Murphy	USFS
Shiloh Walkosak	Reid Park Zoo

Sergio Avila	Sky Island Alliance
Emil McCain	Humboldt University
Tony Povilitis	University of NM - Gallup
Eric Gese	USDA-WS-Nat'l Wildlife Research Center
Albert Lannon	Friends of Jaguar
Michael Terrio	Friends of Jaguar
Maio Velosic	
Kim Antieau	
Wendy Glenn	Malpai Borderlands Group, rancher
Susan Krentz	rancher NE of Douglas
Gary Helbing	USFS
Jack Barnitz	New Mexico BLM Las Cruces
David Bergman	USDA-Wildlife Services
JR Murdock	USDA-Wildlife Services
Justin Price	NAU
Keel Price	USDA Las Cruces NM
Bud Starnes	NM
Judy Keeler	NM & Hidalgo County rancher
Heidi Kuska	BLM
Mark Crites	USFWS
Charles Rau	Chiricahuas
Michael Robinson	Center for Biological Diversity
Stephen Gault	Hidalgo County rancher
Meira Gault	
Bill McDonald	Malpai Borderlands Group
Sarah Rinkevich	USFWS
C. Zoe Hadel	University of Arizona
Melanie Culver	University of Arizona
Dan Bell	
Bill Van Pelt	Arizona Game & Fish Dept.
Terry Johnson	Arizona Game & Fish Dept.
Sharon Hansen	Arizona Game & Fish Dept.
Wendy Warner	
Sara E. Shute	Jaguar Conservation Fund

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January 20, 2006

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A. Opening Comments and Ground Rules

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B. Jaguar Conservation Strategy

The meeting was reconvened to work on the Jaguar Conservation Strategy. The group worked through the 1997 conservation agreement and made suggestions for conservation measures. The following timeline was developed for completion of the strategy:

- February 17-Public draft distributed-this draft was developed from comments received from the January 20 meeting.
- Week of March 20-Public meeting held on same day in the two states to collect comments on February 17, draft document.
- April 7-document distributed for greater public review via the Endangered Species Update
- April 27-28-Discuss document at scheduled JAGCT meeting
- No later than May 12, JAGCT will take document through approval and briefing processes.
- June 29-30 Cooperators will either sign or give indication of signature on the Jaguar Conservation Document